

FURTHER DEBATE IN CONGRESS.

North Carolina Cherokee Indians.

When the amendment of the Senate to the Indian appropriation bill was under consideration in the House of Representatives, viz: "For the extinguishment of the claim of the Cherokees to the lands they occupy in the State of North Carolina"—

Mr. SHEPPERD expressed his regret and surprise, that the amendment under consideration should be met by the opposition of the honorable gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. LUMPKIN]; for, said Mr. S. though it is true, that North Carolina does not present herself, claiming the extinguishment of the Indian title within her limits, under any express contract, like that which Georgia rightfully sets up; yet, said Mr. S. by a slight consideration of the question, it will appear, that there are strong reasons why North Carolina should share in the benefit proposed to Georgia. Nor, said he, can her claim to a favorable consideration be weakened in the estimation of the Committee, because she has not heretofore importuned the nation on this subject, nor disturbed the quiet of the Indians resident within her limits, but towards whom, Mr. S. remarked, that he was proud to say, his State had ever been disposed to act with due regard to the principles of humanity and justice. A strong illustration, said Mr. S. of the truth of this remark will be afforded, when the Committee come to consider the farther amendment, which proposes refunding to North Carolina, the money paid by her for the extinguishment of the Indian reservations.

North Carolina, said Mr. S., possessing a vast extent of Western Territory, in the year 1789 ceded it to the General Government, with no other reservation in her own favor, than the mere privilege or right of satisfying, out of it, the debts due her citizens, for military and other services, rendered in the war of the Revolution; and even the attainment of this stipulation was, by subsequent events, retarded and embarrassed with many difficulties. Having thus liberally given, North Carolina, said Mr. S., now comes merely to ask that she may have the honor and benefit of being associated with Georgia in the extinguishment of the remnant of the Indian title, within her at present contracted limits: for this, said he, no additional appropriation is asked, nor can the allowance of the request jeopardize, in any way, the just pretensions of Georgia, whilst its rejection may, and in all probability will, lead still farther to increase the burthens, already imposed upon her, by the injurious action of the General Government, in relation to this subject. There is no principle, said Mr. S., more fully illustrated by the melancholy history of the aborigines of this country, than that of their persevering adherence to the name and character of Tribe or Nation; yes, Mr. Chairman, to this rallying point of distinction they are seen to cleave, when scarce a vestige of national existence remains. Extinguish then, said Mr. S., the Indian title in Georgia alone, and the natural consequence will be, that those whom you drive from their miserable abode, in that State, will seek to unite with the remnant of their tribe remaining in North Carolina. Mr. S. adverted to the treaties of 1785 and 1791, by which the Government of the United States has bound the nation of the Cherokees to treat with no individual State; and remarked, that, while he was not disposed to condemn that policy which placed the Indian tribes under the exclusive care of the General Government, yet, said Mr. S., it certainly imposes upon that Government the obligation of extinguishing the Indian title to the lands lying within the individual States. He said, that, by the treaties of 1817 and 1819, it was no doubt the intention of the Executive of the United States to have performed this implied obligation, and that the failure to do so was merely attributable to a misapprehension of the Western and Southern boundary of North Carolina. There yet, said Mr. S., remains a small extent of territory in possession of the Cherokees, unimportant, indeed, in itself, but highly desirable in relation to the integral character of the State. He hoped that this little nook or corner would not be denied to North Carolina—she who had, by the donation already referred to, endowed the General Government with a fertile and extensive region, from which had long since sprung into existence a flourishing and fast populating State—one that does honor to this Union. Mr. S. concluded by expressing his regret that he should have felt it his duty to detain the Committee, even for a moment, and that, too, at a time when the honorable gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. McDUFFIE] had expressed a laudable desire to close the discussion.